L Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

584 When a man wants to marry, he pays the girl so much money down. Her price runs from about Rs.70* to Rs.500, according as the man is a commoner or a shaikh. (I am not of course here referring to alliances and customs ruling among the great princely houses of Arabia, such as the Al Sa'ud, Al Khalifah or Al Subah.)†

The man also has to provide the bride with a frock or two (*kiswah*) and a "bed" to lie on (*frásh*), usually consisting of a red cotton quilt (*laháf*) for spreading on the ground. This provision of the marriage-bed by the prospective husband is essential.

585 584 The gift to the bride of money, clothes and marriage-bed is called the *jeház*, and is a universal custom. The *jeház*‡ having been presented, the marriage ceremony is carried out by the local *muta'awah*, or man learned in religion. Among shaikhs, etc., this person is usually an *alim* or priest, but among the poorer Badawin the *muta'awah* may be any person who can lead the prayers and has what they call *'ilm* or learning.

In every community, however small, there will always be found some person qualified to solemnise marriage, if only the local blind man.

The marriage ceremony is very simple indeed: the priest merely asks the man if he will take the girl and the bridegroom replies "yes" in front of witnesses. He then asks the girl's representative (her father or brother) if she agrees to have this man for husband, and when the reply "yes" is given, the ceremony is over. Occasionally the bride is seated behind the tent partition, and hears everything that goes on, but this is rare.

The bride has, of course, snatched glimpses of her prospective husband and at least knows what he looks like. Unless the girl is his cousin and has been brought up with him, the bridegroom on the other hand has not as a rule seen his prospective wife. Of course, if he is clever he has ways and means of getting a peep beforehand, and the girl willingly helps him to satisfy his curiosity.

584 According to accepted custom, a man may not propose to an unmarried girl, even if he finds and courts her among the camels. It is

* A rupee is normally equal to 1s. 4d.

† Among the Al Subah the marriage sum is about Rs.1500 to Rs.2000.

‡ See also trousseau at the end of this chapter.

Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

not done. He must approach her through her father. He can and does, however, propose in person to a widow or a divorced woman.

After marriage the Badawin takes his bride to the tent he has previously pitched for her, close to that of her father, and consummation takes place. Many are the curious eyes and ears which are concentrated on the bridal tent.

As with us, those chiefly interested in the marriage ceremony are the other women of the camp.

Slaves marrying go through the same ceremonies as the freeborn, the master and mistress of the slave acting the part of the parents of the bridegroom: and as much interest is evinced in the marriage of one of their slaves as in that of one of the family.

The Badawin's love for cohabitation is well known, and as I have said elsewhere, sex is to him the supreme joy of life. Both bride and bridegroom indulge riotously in this honeymoon period. So wildly passionate is their love-making that I have known of a man breaking two of his wife's ribs on the first night of their marriage. As soon as the wife finds herself with child, she lets the other women know about it, and it becomes the occasion for much rejoicing. She continues cohabiting with her husband as a matter of course till just before the baby's birth.

DIVORCE

Divorce procedure is simplicity itself. The man need only say to his wife before witnesses that he does not want her any more. He has to make the statement *three times* for it to be valid: *Ma arid ich, ma arid ich, ma arid ich.* No disgrace attaches to the woman, who takes the matter quite philosophically, and proceeds to look for another husband.

If the man divorces the woman, she keeps the *jehâz* he has given her, which is sufficient provision for her for a considerable time, or till she gets a second husband. It must not be forgotten that she has nearly always invested her *jehâz* in buying a camel or some sheep and has thus become an owner of livestock.

The point to emphasise is that no disgrace whatsoever clings to divorce, and if the girl is fair, or was the wife of a big shaikh, there is

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 .MI 1 Kuwait MI1
Bedouins MJ4

B 586 husband, she usually tells him so and asks for a divorce. If the husband has any decency (*shlma*), he will grant her request, provided the other man repays him his *jehâz*, i.e. money he has spent on his wife. This rule does not apply to a first-cousin wife, *bint 'âm*.

k 585 B 585 In Kuwait town they have the pretty custom, that a bridegroom must, when he gets married, spend seven dâys with his wife in her parents' house. This applies also to the Kuwait tribes proper. The idea is to make things easy for the wife, who usually is filled with shame and nervousness. Among the Kuwait 'Arabdar or local tribesmen, a marriage is arranged and settled as follows:

k 584 B 584 "A" wants to marry. He expresses his desire to his womenfolk, who look round and suggest a likely bride in such and such a tent. "A" then sends them over to see the girl's mother, and to discuss the matter. If the mother is willing, she sends the women off to the girl's father, and to him they propound the idea also. The father then says what he is willing to accept as his daughter's *jehâz* and the money is paid over. Haggling does not take place in such matters, for if "A"'s deputies do not agree to the amount of the *jehâz* they simply say "nothing doing", and go back to their tent.

k 585 B 585 Things having been settled and the prospective bridegroom informed, "A" sends for a *muta'awah* (priest) and also summons the girl's father. The marriage is then solemnised, the father of the girl being her proxy. The priest gets Rs.2 as his fee.

Up to this time the girl quite possibly, in fact usually, knows nothing of what is going on or being arranged for her. The first news she gets is from her mother, who tells her to prepare for the marriage-bed that night. Great excitement ensues and often much reluctance. When the girl is ready and everything properly arranged, usually by the same evening, the bridegroom is escorted to the bride's tent, or more usually to a small tent set apart near that of the parents. He is made to sit down and receive his men friends for about an hour. When they have all gone, his own women relatives and those of the bride bring the girl to the tent, clustering round her to prevent her escaping, as she must pretend to want to do. Having put her into the tent, whose sides (*rugg*) are all closed, they shout out to "A" to seize and take possession of the girl of his choice, and then discreetly retire. The girl usually attempts to bolt after the women, or get out by

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25
Bedouin M04
Arabs M10

B 601 the father's or the mother's family. Should a man's father have married into his own patrilineage the mother's patrilineal family, however, is generally referred to by the terms given to paternal relatives.

B 602 Kinship behaviour is characterized by a respect-relationship towards older generations. There is also a kind of avoidance between certain in-laws known as *nsib* (male) or *nsiba* (female). The avoided relatives in-law are the following:— father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, younger brother's wife, younger sister's husband, older brother of spouse, older sister of spouse. Other in-laws known as *ḥamm* (male) or *ḥamma* (female) are not avoided; these are:— older sister's husband, younger brother of spouse, older brother's wife, younger sister of a spouse (cf. Miner 1953, p. 146). When B 582 the levirate is practised a wife can marry a younger brother of her deceased husband, but not his elder brother, just as in the case of the sororate a man can marry a younger sister of his deceased wife but not her elder sister. Thus marriage between persons of the same generation is not permitted should there already be an established avoidance relationship between them. People involved in an avoidance relationship cannot marry.

B 582 An interesting and much discussed trait of Arab social organization is preferential marriage with a father's brother's daughter. Most Arabs I have questioned claimed her to be the most suitable spouse, but ●584 they also said that for various reasons other types of marriage frequently took place. It might happen, for example, that marriage of this preferential type was not contracted because of conflict between the two families in question. But the factor which frequently leads to marriages of types other than that with a father's brother's daughter seems to be the following:— In an Arab family, the father has the decisive, final word in choosing spouses for his children. The children when contracting a first marriage are forced to marry the persons chosen by their father. Even so, however, the choice is frequently the result of the mother's initiative for she knows the young girls far better than does her husband. She is able to visit them, can talk freely to them, and she knows their characters and their abilities. A husband will therefore often give way to his wife's wishes even if she chooses a maternal cousin or some girl other than the father's brother's daughter.

B 582 I have already mentioned certain relatives with whom marriage is forbidden when the levirate and the sororate are practised. There are many other kinswomen whom a man is not allowed to marry, namely:— all kinswomen of the parents' and the grandparents' generations, brother's daughter, brother's daughter's daughter, brother's son's daughter, sister, sister's daughter, sister's daughter's daughter, sister's son's daughter.

A T 177 The Arabs I know best are those who live in Tuareg country, and some of them have been much influenced by Tuareg social customs. Many of these Arabs are bi-lingual, speaking of their kinsmen both in Arabic and in Tuareg. Sometimes they seem to be in doubt whether it is better to marry a father's brother's daughter than a cross-cousin. The *Ahl Azzi* Arabs, who lead a pastoral life in Ahaggar and are much mixed with the Tuareg, pay bride-wealth like the vassal Tuareg tribes, but this is not so with *Ahl Azzi* Arabs who are sedentary and live at Tamanrasset. These sedentary Arabs never give camels for bride-wealth, but instead certain articles of dress and ornaments, the price of which is about 25,000 French francs, equivalent in value to a camel. A less comprehensive dowry is given by the bride's father. The food expenses connected with a marriage are paid in part by the groom or his father, and in part by the bride's father. The sedentary agriculturists, the *Ḥarratin* (*Izeggaren*),